



Red Tail Flyer

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Tour offers Airmen behind-the-scene view

By Staff Sgt. Lindsey Maurice

332nd AEW Public Affairs

Balad Airmen curious about the base's mission have the opportunity to see what goes on first hand.

The Passport Tour, now in its fourth week, gives base men and women the chance to visit some of the major shops on base and learn how each one operates.

"It's amazing how many areas of responsibility make up the total force of Balad," said Senior Master Sgt. Shane Clark, Balad Fire and Emergency Services fire chief and Top 3 member. "This tour gives Airmen the opportunity to see how other sections operate in the 'one team - one fight' concept."

During previous passport tours, which are sponsored by the Balad Top 3 and run by the fire department, attendees have visited such units as the Joint Defense Operations Center, Expeditionary Air Control Squadron, Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron, Expeditionary Fighter Squadron, Contingency Aeromedical Staging Facility, explosive ordinance disposal shop, air control tower, fire department and intelligence.

The tour is offered every Wednesday and lasts about eight hours, including lunch.

Since the program's start, about 30 base members have attended, said Sergeant Clark, and almost all of them have had only great things to say about their tour experience.

"It is not uncommon for Airmen to contact us right away and say thank you for the opportunity and to tell us how much they learned," he said.

Airman 1st Class Crystal Boulanger of the 332nd Expeditionary Communications Squadron said the tour she attended last week was even better than what she had expected.

"I learned a lot about what goes on here



Air Force/Staff Sgt. Lindsey Maurice

Master Sgt. Gary Robinson of the 332nd Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron explains Balad's F-16 mission to base Airmen during a Passport Tour Feb. 2.

at Balad that I would never have known had I not gone on the tour," she said. "I think the best part of it was seeing all the cool electrical systems used between units to keep us safe and the mission going."

Master Sgt. Doug Drum, who served as a tour escort twice, now said he has also learned a great deal from his experiences.

"I learn something new every time I go out to the different shops," said the Balad Fire and Emergency Services assistant fire chief. "The 332nd AEW is a great organization."

Sergeant Clark encourages those interested in attending a future tour to sign up early.

"Since some of the areas visited on the

tour are mission sensitive, participants must have a secret security clearance," he said. "Because of this, they need to submit their names early so we can forward those names to the proper authorities for verification."

Sergeant Clark added that the latest a person can sign up is 8:40 a.m. the Monday prior. Each tour group meets at Town Hall at 8:40 a.m. Wednesday and returns around 5 p.m. that evening.

Those interested in attending should e-mail Master Sgt. Coris Throckmorton at coris.throckmorton@blab.centaf.af.mil. For more information about the tour, Airmen should contact their unit first sergeant.

Council opens doors to base NCOs

By Staff Sgt. Lindsey Maurice

332nd AEW Public Affairs

Miles away from home, working 12 hours a day, six days a week, most Balad Airmen don't have time to make friends and experience life outside their work centers.

Luckily for base NCOs, there's one group that can help -- The Red Tail 56 Council.

The group, which formed in September during the last Aerospace Expeditionary Force rotation, focuses primarily on boosting morale and improving the quality of life for all base Airmen, said council president Tech. Sgt. Anthony Bechtold.

"Joining the council is a great way to meet new people and make a positive impact on the community at the same time," Sergeant Bechtold said. "The last rotation's council did a variety of community projects including making Christmas cards for base Airmen (E-1 through E-4), conducting an adopt-a-road project (cleaning up the base roads), and decorating one of the dining facilities at Thanksgiving."

The sergeant added that this rotation's group has even more projects in the works.

"We want to concentrate on about four to five morale and quality of life issues along with a fundraiser or two," Sergeant

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Tech. Sgt.
Anthony Bechtold,
Red Tail 56 Council
president



Wednesdays in the Balad Town Hall.

Tech. Sgt. Richard Rusk of the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing legal office joined the council about three weeks ago and said he is very optimistic about his involvement over the next few months.

Bechtold said. "Some of the projects we're working on right now include cleaning up the base water stations, installing wooden walkways around the base and painting a mural on one of the T barriers."

"We're also thinking of having a spring volleyball tournament and possibly a combat dining-in later in the rotation, but those are still just ideas at this point."

There are currently about 25 members in the Red Tail 56 Council, but the group is always looking for new staff and technical sergeants to join.

The council meets at 6:30 p.m.

"I joined the Red Tail 56 Council because I thought it would be a good opportunity to network with other people from around the base as well as help make things better for everyone while we're here," he said. "I think now that we've elected new officers for this rotation, the group is going to be great."

"I really believe we'll do some good things for the Airmen on base as well as for the base as a whole."

For more information about the Red Tail 56 Council, e-mail Sergeant Bechtold at anthony.bechtold@blab.centaf.af.mil or call 443-7930.

H-6 Security increases

By Tech. Sgt. Brent Payne

332nd Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron

Only service and emergency response vehicles may enter and park within the H-6 housing area.

Personnel must park outside of the perimeter and walk in through authorized access points located off of or near to All American Drive, Sapper Road, Town Hall, Expeditionary Mission Support Group, Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron, and at the south corner of H-6.

Parking is available adjacent to the Sapper Road and Town Hall entry points.

Personnel making additional entry points or forcibly crossing the security perimeter outside of the authorized points will be

deemed suspicious, apprehended by security forces and turned over to the Provost Marshal's Office.

When directed to provide increased security for the H-6 housing area, Security Forces personnel are positioned at the pedestrian entry points and within the security perimeter.

Those traveling through the housing area must help out security forces by using appropriate entry points, presenting identification when necessary and raising the alarm if something is suspicious.

Remember, Security Force's members are on duty to ensure the residents of H-6 have a secure location.

For more information, contact unit first sergeants or the 332nd ESFS at 443-6704.

Balad officers promoted

The following officers have been or will be promoted during February:

Promoted to 1st Lieutenant

- Christina Akinnusotu, 332nd Contingency Aeromedical Staging Facility
- Michael Pomager, 332nd CASF
- Michael Prosser, 332nd Expeditionary Communications Squadron

Promoted to Major

- Daniel Dunn, 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing
- David Vercellone, 732nd Expeditionary Mission Support Group

AGE keeps ground mission running

By Senior Airman
Colleen Wronek

332nd AEW Public Affairs

The 332nd Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron Aerospace Ground Equipment flight is a vital part of Balad's mission.

"If it wasn't for us, specialists and crew chiefs couldn't do their job," said Tech. Sgt. Michael Gosik, 332nd Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron AGE flight chief, "Our purpose is to provide the aircraft with power and equipment so they can accomplish their mission."

The flight provides and maintains many types of equipment, including generators for aircraft power, equipment to heat and air-condition the aircraft, maintenance stands, wash carts for foreign object debris, floodlights, and munitions handling equipment.

"From simple oil checks to complete equipment engine teardown and rebuild, our flight makes sure the equipment works before it gets to the aircraft," said Airman 1st Class Todd Spencer, 332nd



Air Force/Senior Airman Colleen Wronek

Airman 1st Class Todd Spencer, 332nd Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron Aerospace Ground Equipment apprentice, changes a starter on a bomb lift, which lifts missiles and bombs onto pods under the aircraft. In addition to flightline operations, the AGE flight helps civil engineers provide power to Balad housing areas.

EMXS AGE apprentice.

Besides equipment maintenance, Airman Spencer delivers AGE to the aircraft.

"I make sure the equipment is there when the aircraft arrives," he said. "At the home station, the urgency for age delivery isn't as high, but here when I get the call, I have to deliver the equipment right away

so the aircraft can stay on schedule and continue its mission."

The flight is tasked with monitoring AGE for all aircraft units on Balad including the Predators, F-16's and transient alert.

"Any airplane that lands here, we take care of," Sergeant Gosik said. "We maintain a 98 percent mission capable rate in harsh conditions with limited parts, equipment and personnel."

The flight also supports tasks not normally done at the home station.

"Because of our knowledge of generators and other equip-

ment, we help civil engineers provide power to the housing areas and heaters for runway repair," Sergeant Gosik said.

This unique flight has run into a few difficulties due to the deployed environment.

"Some of the challenges are the muddy and dusty conditions, limited shop space with limited tools and constant operations tempo," Sergeant Gosik said. "Despite it all, we get the job done. I'm really impressed with what our guys do."

Sergeant Gosik and Airman Spencer are both from Hill AFB, Utah.



Don't let trailers get toasty, practice fire prevention

By Tech. Sgt Robert Foster

332nd AEW Ground Safety

During January, the fire department put out several electrical fires. With the poor condition of Balad's facilities, fire prevention is key to ensuring we don't lose what we have or hinder the mission.

Electrical hazards are a major cause of fires. People should ensure they don't overload power strips and outlets. Keeping them in good condition will go far in fire prevention.

Power strips do have circuit protection, but are rated higher than the outlets they're plugged into. The outlet could overload and catch fire long before the power strip trips and shuts off.

When using power strips, do not plug extension cords or other power strips into them.

Keep wiring, power strips, electrical equipment and other power sources clean and dry and do not place anything on them.

Taking simple precautions with electrical equipment will ensure everything you own isn't burned to a crisp.



Air Force/courtesy of the 332nd Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron fire department

Remains of a shower cadillac after an electrical fire. To prevent fires from happening make sure outlets aren't overloaded and electrical devices are clean and away from water.

Superbowl Monday



Air Force/Master Sgt. Thomas Wood

Servicemembers get a taste of home by watching Superbowl XXXIX at the Town Hall early Monday morning.

The 332nd Expeditionary Services Squadron, along with the Panther Airmen's Advisory Council and the Company Grade Officers' Council, sponsored the event at both the Town Hall and the rec tent. The pre-game festivities kicked off at 2 a.m. with free pizza, soda and wings. Prizes were also given out during the game.

Facing challenges, never losing a bomber, Tuskegee Airmen make history

By Master Sgt. Daniel Deforest

332nd AEW historian

By now, just about everyone in the wing knows that the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing descended from the famous Tuskegee Airmen of the 332nd Fighter Group and most people know the challenges they faced, not only from the enemy, but from their own country and their own branch of service.

Many books and articles have documented their struggle to fly and fight for their country, but what really defines the Tuskegee Airmen of the 332nd is their unique and enviable combat record.

One of the group's greatest claims to fame is they're the only fighter group in WWII that never lost a bomber to enemy fighter aircraft. They achieved this record flying against the most advanced enemy aircraft, operating from several different airfields, and conducting combat operations in three different types of fighters.

After advanced training in P-39 Airacobras and P-40 Warhawks, first at Tuskegee, Ala. and later at Selfridge Field, Mich., the 332nd Fighter Group deployed to Europe in 1944, arriving at Montecorvino, Italy on Feb. 3.

Two days after arrival, they began flying P-39s to escort convoys, protect harbors and conduct armed reconnaissance missions.

The P-39, while considered a capable ground attack aircraft, became obsolete by 1944. It could not reach the altitudes required to compete with German Luftwaffe fighters that were used to intercept American B-17 and B-24 bombers.

With a top speed of 376 mph, the P-39 compared poorly to the German ME 109G, whose top speed was 426 mph.

In fact, most theater commanders would no longer use P-39s due to their poor performance against enemy aircraft, especially in the European theater, and production of the P-39 ended in August 1944.

However, as the need for bomber escort became more urgent, the group converted to the more capable, but unfamiliar P-47 Thunderbolt in May 1944. They later upgraded to the top-of-the-line P-51C Mustang. Unlike the P-39, the Mustang, with a maximum speed of 437 mph, could easily match any enemy piston-engine aircraft and



Photo courtesy of the National Museum of U.S. Air Force History

A class of twin-engine pilots in front and single engine pilots in the rear, Dec. 1943, at the Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Ala.

remained in service well after the end of WWII.

Unfortunately, the enemy had more than just piston-engine fighters. German scientists had been developing advanced weapons for years, including jet and rocket powered fighters specifically designed to shoot down American and British bombers.

In July 1944, they began using these top secret aircraft, the ME 262 Schwalbe powered by two turbojet engines, and the rocket powered ME 163B Komet.

The ME 262 had a top speed of 540 mph, and took a heavy toll on bomber formations during the nine months between the time it entered service and the end of the war.

But the 332nd pilots prevailed and developed tactics to prevent the new jets from destroying their bombers.

They found the P-51 could recover from a dive faster than the ME 262, and was generally more maneuverable.

Exploiting the weaknesses of the German aircraft, combined with strict discipline, (no pilot was allowed to leave the bombers unprotected to chase enemy aircraft) the group maintained a perfect escort record and destroyed several ME 262s in the air, while the bombers they escorted destroyed hundreds more on the ground.

The second German aircraft, known as the Komet, was designed to take off and immediately climb up past the bomber formation (it could climb at 16,000 feet per minute), then fire its rockets at the bombers as it came back down.

While this didn't present much of a threat to the 332nd fighter pilots, the Komet's methods proved deadly for several bomber crews escorted by other fighter groups.

Again, the 332nd exploited the Komet's weaknesses and destroyed a few of these aircraft in the air, while bombers destroyed the airfields and factories that housed and produced them.

In addition to learning to fly new types of fighters and facing new weapons systems, the men of the 332nd moved four times before the war ended, each time moving their aircraft, personal gear, maintenance shops and quarters and setting up operations at the new, usually totally undeveloped, location.

They first moved to Capodechino in April 1944, then to Ramitelli the following month.

They remained at Ramitelli for nearly a year, moving to Cattolica in May 1945, flying the last of their escort missions from there.

Then they moved to Lucera in July 1945, in preparation for their return to the U.S., with the expectation of reforming for combat in the Pacific.

The end of the war however, also spelled the end of the 332nd Fighter Group, and the unit was deactivated in October 1945.

The 332nd fought hard to win the respect they deserved, then fought hard to win the war, earning a unique place in history and setting an unmatched record in spite of the incredible challenges they faced.

For that reason, the legend of the 332nd lives on as an active combat unit.

Live the legacy, watchout for your wingman

By Lt. Col. John Ewing

332nd Contingency Aeromedical
Staging Facility commander

The heritage of the 332nd Fighter Group, the Tuskegee Airmen, is legendary.

Flying as a long range escort for heavy bombers striking deep into the German heartland, the pilots of the 332nd accumulated more than 15,000 combat sorties.

During this period, the Tuskegee Airmen never lost a bomber to enemy fighter action. Their expertise quickly spread far and wide and every bomber crew lucky enough to have a "Red Tail" on their wing breathed a sigh of relief.

We all have become familiar with the Red Tail legacy and have, by association, become Red Tails ourselves. We have quite a legend to live up to. I wonder if each of us is doing everything we can to ensure the safety of our wingmen. Can we live up to the legacy of our predecessors when it comes to taking care of those who count on us?

Having recently lost an Air Force teammate to the aftermath of a physical assault, I have to make the question a little more personal; is your wingman safe?

For our Wingman Program to work effectively it must be more than simply identifying your buddy as your wingman.

Lip service is not enough. There must be a conscious, ongoing commitment to your wingman's safety and an under-

standing and trust of your wingman's commitment to be equally focused on your safety; to know that "they truly have your 'six.'"

Personal integrity is also critical in maintaining the wingman relationship. Identification as a wingman means always being there and refusing to relinquish the responsibility for the other person's safety. It also means being personally accountable in living up to both sides of the wingman relationship, being there for your wingman and expecting them to be there for you.

We are all about integrity, service and excellence and it all sounds pretty simple. So why do some of our teammates become statistics?

I expect there are many reasons why this might happen: bad karma; being in the wrong place at the wrong time; or simply being unaware of the risk. The common denominator is most likely the decision that there is no real danger and making a decision to proceed without their wingman.

So what can we do to prevent other teammates from becoming statistics? First, as previously mentioned, there must

be fierce commitment to the program from the highest levels of leadership to the most junior Airman.

We must make a commitment to the wingman program our modus operandi and set and reinforce the expectation that members will use the program.

As supervisors we must help manage the program and

demonstrate to our subordinates through personal actions and actively engage with our wingmen.

Finally, as wingmen, we need to recommit ourselves to the safety of our wingman and let our wingman know we are holding him or her accountable for our safety.

Renewed commitment to our wingman program will enhance the safety and security of all of our Air Force teammates. To reenergize your commitment, stop and ask yourself "how safe is my wingman?" The answer should tell you how safe you are.

Identification as a wingman means always being there and refusing to relinquish the responsibility for the other person's safety.

Lt. Col. John Ewing,
332nd Contingency
Aeromedical Staging
Facility commander



The Panther Airmen's Advisory Council is hosting a Foreign Object Debris wash from 7 to 11 a.m. Thursday at the North and South HAS flightline Entry Control Points.

Donations are accepted and funds raised will be used for PAAC coins and other events the council will sponsor in the future.

Defense briefs

Officials announce Air Force budget proposal

WASHINGTON – The Air Force piece of the 2006 defense budget is designed to make the joint team better, officials said.

Announced Feb. 7, the budget grows from \$96 billion that Congress enacted for fiscal 2005, to \$102.9 billion in 2006, a senior Air Force budget official said. After covering the growing costs of inflation and fuel costs, there is real growth of about \$4 billion.

About \$34.7 billion, or 34 percent, of the proposed \$102.9 billion funding is dedicated to people. This growth covers the costs of a 3.1 percent military pay raise and 2.3 percent increase for the civilian force.

Readiness programs account for \$29.9 billion, or 29 percent, of the proposed Air Force funding. This does not include the operations funding for the war on terror, which is funded separately in a supplemental request to Congress. Rather, it supports training and day-to-day operations, and includes increases for higher costs, especially in fuel, and additional dollars for key missions supporting the warfighter.

Modernization funding, \$35.1 billion or 34 percent of the total, does not increase significantly, but there are a number of specific programs that grow, especially programs designed to provide new capabilities in space.

Military construction makes up the remaining \$32 billion, and grows modestly to cover upgrades to additional family housing units.

The detailed Air Force budget is available at: <http://www.dod.mil/comptroller/defbudget/fy2006/index.html>.

DOD seeks people with language skills, regional expertise

WASHINGTON – Defense Department officials are looking for people with language skills and an understanding of other countries' geographies, cultures and people to support current and future operations.

To help boost language skills, DOD officials plan to introduce several new initiatives:

- Received legislative authority to increase foreign language proficiency pay for military linguists from the current high of \$300 a month to a top rate of \$1,000.
- Pays stipends to college students involved in regional studies and language studies who agree to seek jobs within the U.S. national security establishment, through the National Security Education Program.
- Established the National Flagship Language Initiative, in which colleges and universities offer advanced language training in Arabic, Korean, Chinese and Russian to students who agree to work for the national security establishment.
- Survey members of the current force, both military and civilian, to determine who has language skills that could prove useful in current or future operations.
- Issue a white paper encouraging the United States to promote the emphasis placed on language skills nationwide.
- Considering establishing a database in which American citizens can register their language skills or sign up for a civilian linguist reserve corps that could contribute to national language requirements as needed.

Meet your neighbor



Staff Sgt. Dalylah Berumen

Home station: Lackland AFB, Texas

Unit: 332nd Contingency Aeromedical Staging Facility

Hobbies: reading, cooking, fishing, running, camping, anything that involves outdoors

How do you contribute to the mission? I feed the CASF patients and staff.

What is your favorite aspect of this deployment? I enjoy the people we are helping out by being here.

Besides your family, what do you miss back home? I miss being able to sleep in.

From the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing First Sergeant:

Did you know long or short sleeved t-shirts must be tucked in while wearing authorized conservative or official PT gear?

This applies everywhere on base, including walking to the shower or at the gym.

Air Force Religious Schedule

Protestant	Chapel
Sundays:	8 p.m. • Sunday School – H-6 Chapel
9 a.m. • Traditional – Hospital	Fellowship and Study
11 a.m. • Contemporary Worship – H-6 Chapel	Daily:
5:30 p.m. • Inspirational Worship – H-6 Chapel	8:30 p.m. • Band of Brothers Fellowship – H-6 Chapel
Roman Catholic	9 p.m. • Band of Brothers Prayer – H-6 Chapel
Daily:	Sundays:
When Catholic Chaplain is available, Mass • 7:30 p.m. – H-6 Chapel	2 p.m. • Protestant Bible Study – Hospital
Confessions – Offered prior to Daily Mass	Tuesdays:
Saturdays:	7:30 p.m. • Purpose Driven Life – Chapel Fellowship Room
7:30 p.m. • Mass – H-6 Chapel	Thursdays:
Sundays:	7 p.m. • Latter Day Saints Study Group – Chapel Fellowship Room
9 a.m. • Mass – H-6 Chapel	Fridays:
2 p.m. • Mass – CJSOTF Chapel	7:30 p.m. • Women's Bible Study – Hospital
3:30 p.m. • Mass – JSOAP-AP Chapel	
Latter Day Saints	
Sundays:	
7 p.m. • Sacraments – H-6	

Know what this is?

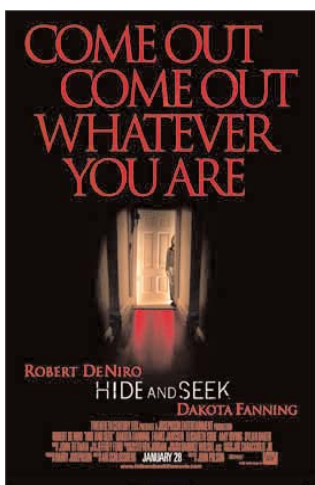


Air Force/Staff Sgt. Lindsey Maurice

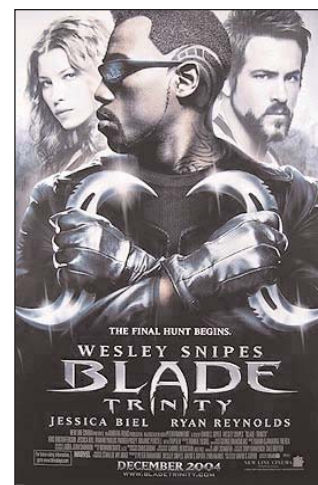
If you can identify the object, send us an e-mail at redtailflyer@blab.centaf.af.mil. The first person with the correct answer wins a \$5 gift certificate courtesy of the Army and Air Force Exchange Service. Last week's photo of a boot brush was first identified by Senior Airman Jkai Ford of the 332nd Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron.

Sustainer Movie Schedule

Schedule is subject to change



Today, Feb. 11	6 p.m. - Saw
3 p.m. - Hide and Seek	9 p.m. - Alfie
6 p.m. - Blade Trinity	Tuesday, Feb. 15
9 p.m. - Blade Trinity	3 p.m. - Anchorman
Saturday, Feb. 12	6 p.m. - Collateral
3 p.m. - Blade Trinity	9 p.m. - Blade Trinity
6 p.m. - Hide and Seek	Wednesday, Feb. 16
9 p.m. - Hide and Seek	3 p.m. - The Grudge
Sunday, Feb. 13	6 p.m. - Ocean's 12
3 p.m. - Woman Thou Art Loosed	9 p.m. - Hide and Seek
6 p.m. - Hide and Seek	Thursday, Feb. 17
9 p.m. - Blade Trinity	3 p.m. - Flight of the Phoenix
Monday, Feb. 14	6 p.m. - Hide and Seek
3 p.m. - Alexander	9 p.m. - Blade Trinity



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All photos are Air Force photos, unless otherwise indicated.

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